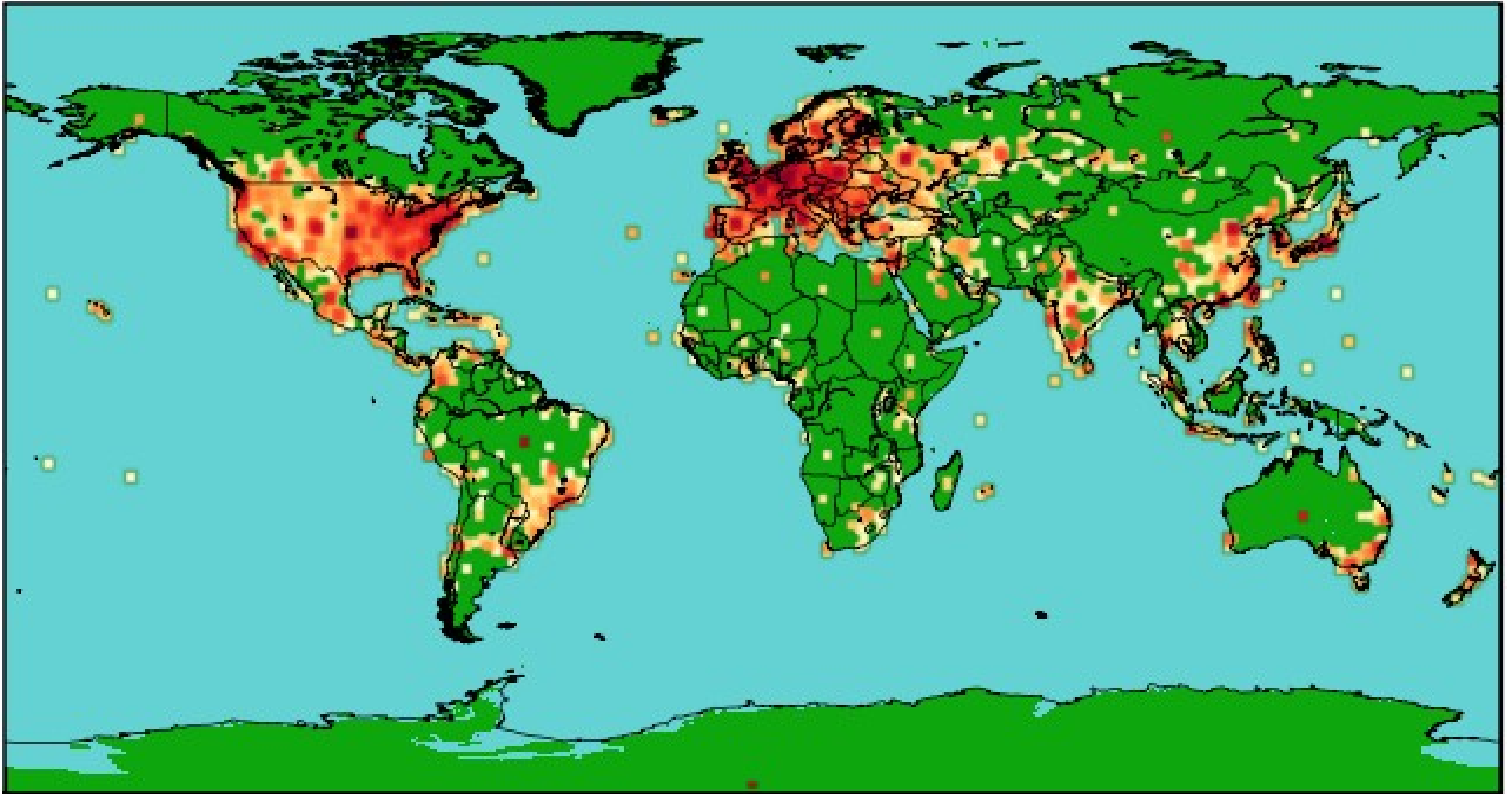


300,000 Fedora boxes checked in for updates last week.



The Thesis

If we do not invest in the ability
to harness the **ideas** of the community,
then we incur all of the costs of proprietary software
without gaining the primary benefit of free software.

ideas

“I wish I could download
my own custom version
of Fedora from a website.”

“I wish I could
use all of these
old computers
in our school's
classrooms.”

“I wish I could carry
my entire computer
with me on a single
USB key.”

ideas

“I wish I had the
power to fix
this simple bug
in Thunderbird.”

“I wish someone
would fix the bug
I filed six months ago.”

“I wish they'd teach
how open source
works at my
university.”

“I wish I could just
run this one command
on every system in
the company and get
the results in a simple list.”

Our Core Strategy

blah blah blah
community of development and use
blah blah blah

[**How is this actionable?**]

The community has a million ideas.

**Which ones should we invest in...
and how?**

I. How do we decide where to invest?

The Key Questions for community investment

1. Does this project have a chance to **transform** Red Hat's business?
2. Is this investment **low cost / high value**?
3. Do people **outside** of RH care **passionately** about this idea?
4. Are there clear ways to invest in **community capacity**?
5. Is there a **simple plan** to get started, with **aggressive goals**?

1. Does this project have a **chance** to **transform** Red Hat's business?

Top line: new products, new markets

Revisor could lead to the custom appliance market

K12 Linux could revolutionize 1-to-1 computing in schools

Bottom line: *dramatically* improving current products and processes

Fedora infrastructure: million\$ in bandwidth savings

Fedora packaging: million\$ in volunteer engineering time

Fedora translations: million\$ in translation services

2. Is this investment **low cost / high value**?

Example: Fedora packaging

1500 packages maintained by 200 RH engineers
3200 packages maintained by 300 community engineers
600 packages with shared maintenance

Project requirements:

A public build system
Technical leadership from within the company

Cost:

A few salaries we were paying anyway
Hardware, much of which has been donated
A big bar tab for the guys who show up at FUDCon

Return:

**40% the cost to Red Hat compared to
developing Fedora entirely on our own**

3. Do people **outside** of RH care **passionately** about this idea?

Example: Revisor

The Fedora Unity community wanted different versions of Fedora...
versions we didn't offer.

So they started their own project.

We helped them with tools and a little bit of hosting space.
They did the rest.

Their work could be the future technical foundation
of the appliance business that we've started with Amazon.

**All we did was give them
permission and encouragement.**

4. Are there clear ways to invest in **community capacity?**

Example: Fedora Infrastructure

Everyone wants Fedora on release day,
but the cost to Red Hat in bandwidth has been **enormous**.

But some people with lots of bandwidth **love** Fedora,
and will deliver it for us **for free**,
if we make it easy for them to do so.

The investment:

Mirror management software (time)
plus a NetApp for iBiblio (\$10,000).

The return:

Millions of dollars in bandwidth savings:
Fedora 9 could cost Red Hat \$0 in bandwidth.

5. Is there a **simple plan** to get started, with **aggressive goals**?

The plan should not be perfect,
because perfect plans take too long to implement.

But the goals should be clear,
and everyone should know what they are.

Fedora Extras, in the beginning.

The aggressive goal:
to have as many packages as Debian/Ubuntu
(over 10,000 packages)
[**clear, ambitious, inspiring**]

The simple plan:
Get a public build system running
in two weeks, and see what happens.
[**three years later, tremendously successful**]

II. Once we invest, how do we manage?

The Key Questions for community management

1. Is the project **progressing** towards its goals?
2. Do contributors feel like their work is **meaningful**?
3. Is community participation **growing** over time?
4. Is strong **leadership** developing within the community?

1. Is the project **progressing** towards its goals?

Progress does not have to be rapid,
so long as it is **steady** and **commensurate with investment**.

Low Investment, Rapid Progress = **Awesome!**

High Investment, Rapid Progress = Good

Low Investment, Slow Progress = OK

High Investment, Slow Progress = **Bad!**

(make a project show **progress** before increasing investment)

2. Do contributors feel like their work is **meaningful**?

Are they being thanked for their work?

Are their concerns being addressed?

Are they personally engaged with other contributors?

(**life is too short to volunteer your time where it isn't appreciated**)

(**THIS IS WHY FUDCON AND PERSONAL INTERACTION MATTERS!**)

3. Is community participation **growing** over time?

If the community ideas are good ideas,
and if the core leadership is strong,
and if the needs of new participants are being met,

then and only then will participation grow over time.

(**a community that does not grow will ultimately stagnate**)

4. Is strong **leadership** developing within the community?

As a community grows,
the leadership must grow with it,
in order for Red Hat's investment to scale.

Valuable community members
welcome the challenge of leadership
and the status and experience that come with it.

**The best community leaders
ultimately become the best Red Hat employees.**

(**Jesse Keating / Jack Aboutboul / Seth Vidal / Mike McGrath /
Toshio Kuratomi / Luke Macken / Paul Frields**)

III. Conclusion

Virtualization, NetworkManager
RHEL 5, developed in **Fedora 5 and 6**.

Yum
RHEL 5, developed in **Fedora** to
replace up2date.

SELinux
RHEL 4, developed in **Fedora 2 and 3**.

Tickless Kernel
RHEL 6, developed in **Fedora 7 and 8**.

—

Fedora is where Red Hat generates
potential value.

RHEL is where Red Hat distills that
potential into revenue.

Jesse Keating

Founder of Fedora Legacy project, 2003.

Hired 2005.

Mike McGrath

Lead architect, Fedora Infrastructure, 2005.

Hired 2007.

Seth Vidal

Founder of the yum project, 2002.

Hired 2007.

Paul Frields

Co-lead, Fedora Documentation Project, 2004.

Fedora Board member, 2006.

Hired 2008.

Fedora's competitive advantage is its **people**.

Red Hat's R&D advantage is that we don't pay most of those people.

Community investment builds **mindshare**,
enabling people to develop new **features**
that appear in **Fedora, first**.

Red Hat's future stars are in college right now.
Will they end up in the Fedora community?
Or will they disappear into closed corporations
and never be heard from again?

**Fedora must be the best in the world at
community building.**

the end
(for now)